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Ophthalmic Literature

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THE BROAD SOURCES OF OPHTHALMIC LITERATURE.

The advantages of broadening one's views of ophthalmology through Society discussions and some acquaintance with its literature, are appreciated by some ophthalmologists. But even those who show the best appreciation of ophthalmic societies and literature, rarely think of the importance of having ideas drawn from the most widely separated sources.

Cases of glaucoma and cataract in India have contributed to the profession of the world certain operations and experiences, and views that could not have arisen from the great clinics of Europe. The ophthalmias of Egypt have helped to the understanding of conjunctival inflammations in America, or Japan. To know all that we do about subretinal cysticercus throws light on other diseases of the ocular fundus; and our knowledge of the subject could only have come from countries in which the eating of uncooked meat or fish was a common custom.

An understanding of the dangers of methyl alcohol was first forced upon us by cases of blindness that arose in limited localities where grain alcohol was prohibited. Where could we learn of the dangers of consanguineous marriage causing optic atrophy, retinitis pigmentosa, or albinism, except in countries where limited facilities for travel, and caste, make such unions extremely common?

No one can say at what time some new fact reported from the interior of Africa, or from Japan, or the center of Brazil, may revolutionize our ideas, and treatment, with regard to the most common diseases in every ophthalmic clinic of Europe or North America. What would we know about the causes of syphilis if the trypanosomes of Africa and India had remained unknown? Who can estimate the value of experience with arsenic in sleeping sickness, in turning the thought of Ehrlich to the discovery of salvarsan?

For progress in ophthalmology we need the literature, not only from the great clinics and leading societies, we must have it from all parts of the earth; and especially the careful observations of the isolated worker. The more widely removed he is from the general current of professional experience, the more peculiar the conditions under which he works, provided he still keeps in touch with the general thought of the profession, the more likely he is to bring out some fact, or make some observation needed by the profession, yet only to be obtained through him. This is the reason that we cannot afford to be deprived of any part of the ophthalmic literature of the world.

BOOK NOTICES.

Verhoeff, F. A., Bell, Louis, and Walker, C. B., of Boston. The Pathological Effects of Radiant Energy on the Eye, An Experimental Investigation with a Systematic Review of the Literature. 8vo. 190 pages, 18 plates and 7 figures in the Text. Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Volume 51, No. 13.

This monograph sets forth the results of work done in the Pathological Laboratory of the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary. It is work that is extremely creditable to that Institution, and to American ophthalmology. It is particularly welcome because it deals in a straightforward, scientific, way with a subject of great

practical and current interest, that has been most widely exploited for private gain.

In the literature of the injury of the eye by light, and the radiations closely associated with light, scientific observations have been mingled inextricably with the recommendations of special kinds of protective glass. The pages of the most dignified of German ophthalmological journals, and the name of a great British scientist have been used to help the quackish optician sell glasses, to cure hay fever, or relieve the asthenopia of neurasthenia; until reasonable prudence on the part of ophthalmologists has grown into a pronounced skepticism, as to all statements regarding the influence of these radiations upon the tissues of the eye and the general nervous system.

This monograph opens with a statement of its purpose, and of the nature and distribution of radiant energy. Next the clinical characters of photophthalmia are discussed, with a determination of minimum exposures producing it, and the effects of repeated exposures. The wave lengths of radiations having an abiotic action have been investi gated, and the changes caused in the different ocular tissues are described. Thermic effects are sharply distinguished from the foregoing, and the theory of the action of radiant energy on the tissues is discussed.

The various pathologic conditions ascribed to injury by radiations are taken up separately. These include snow blindness, eclipse blindness, vernal catarrh, senile cataract, etc. After this the application of the known facts to commercial illuminants is considered, and there is a chapter on ultra-violet light as a possible germicidal agent. The review of the literature includes a bibliography of about 400 titles.

The wide range of clinical condititons influenced by these radiations makes it necessary to refer to this work in several different departments of this month's Index of Ophthalmology. It is to be hoped that its chief facts and conclusions will soon be made more available and convenient for study; by reproduction in most of the journals devoted to ophthalmology, or by publication in a distinct volume. When they are so laid before the profession some of the details of experiments can be omitted; and much of the preceding literature will have been rendered superfluous.

American Encyclopedia of Ophthalmology, Volume IX. Edited by Casey A. Wood, assisted by a large staff of collaborators. Pages 6419 to 7190. Fully illustrated. Chicago: Cleveland Press, 1916. Price $6.00 per volume.

That volume IX carries the Encyclopedia from "Institutions" to "Lemotes" tells only a part of the story. It indicates that certain headings beginning with I, J, K, and L, are to be looked for here; but it does not indicate the character of the longer articles, amounting to important monographs, which constitute a valuable feature of this work.

The first of these is the article on "Institutions for the Blind," which has been written by Charles F. F. Campbell, Superintendent for the Ohio State School for the Blind. To the 46 pages that had appeared in volume viii are here added 107 pages, dealing with the American institutions, schools and other resources for the blind. With regard to this part of the article this author says: "We have deliberately refrained from lengthy statements with regard to the education and the training of the blind on this continent, in the belief that the accompanying series of illustrations with their captions will be more effective than many words. It will be observed starting with the care of infants, as exemplified in a nursery for blind babies and ending with assistance for adults, that we show with these pictures practically every phase of work for and by the blind in America. The

illustrations are typical of the best in the country." The 38 illustrations mostly reproductions of photographs, many occupying full pages, well support the claim made for them.

The collection of facts regarding the available resources of each state of the United States, and of each province of Canada, will be of practical usefulness to almost every oculist in America. He is certain to be asked about these things, and expected to have at his command facts that have not been taught him in any course of special study, or included in any standard text book. They could be placed before no class of readers more certain to become interested in them and to use them for the service of the blind, than the subscribers for this work.

In this volume are included the chief sections referring to the iris. Together they occupy nearly one hundred pages. The principal ones on Iridectomy, Iridencleisis, and Iridotomy, by Adolf Alt; Iridocyclitis, Iris, Iris Atrophy, Iris Tumors, and Iritis, by Charles P. Small. Keratitis and allied topics also occupy one hundred pages contributed chiefly by J. D. Lewis and by the Editor, Casey A. Wood. A valuable section on Laboratory Technique by Dr. Wood occupies 32 pages; after it come 69 pages on the lacrimal apparatus, apparently from the same source. But the most extensive of these monographs, 145 pages, is that of Dr. Thomas H. Shastid, on Legal Relations of Ophthalmology. This, we are informed in a footnote, is based on its author's previous writings on the subject, revised and very much enlarged. Both the Editor and the readers of the Encyclopedia are to be congratulated on the fact that the work has advanced another step toward completion.

Transactions of the American Ophthalmological Society, Fifty-Second Annual Meeting, 1916, Volume XIV, Part II. 8vo. 392 pages. Published by the Society, Philadelphia, 1916.

We have here 38 papers; some of them of great value and some accompanied by valuable discussions. They are illustrated by 29 figures in the text; and 14 plates, of which three are in colors. In scientific and practical value these transactions closely rival any similar publication in the world. Seven of the papers are the theses of successful candidates for membership; and they argue well for the maintenance of the high standard of excellence that has been set in this series of volumes. Up to this time these transactions have been published in annual parts, of which three were usually required to make up a volume. This part, however, completes volume XIV; and hereafter the transactions of each year will be published as a separate volume. The early appearance of these transactions, four months after the meeting, is a matter for congratulation to both the members who are to receive them, and to the publication committee.

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Four examples of this condition in the human conjunctiva were seen in the course of two years, at the Siena eye clinic in central Italy. In all four cases the offending organism was the larva of Oestrus ovis. In each instance the patient gave a history of a fly or a similar insect having suddenly flown against the eyeball. The subsequent symptoms were those of a severe conjunctivitis, with abundant lacrimation and

mucopurulent discharge, together with a pronounced sensation of a foreign body in the eye.

In the first case the surgeon removed a total number of fourteen larvæ from the folds of the conjunctival sac; using for the purpose a medicine dropper into which the minute organisms were drawn by suction produced with the rubber tip. The first patient, while recovering from the ocular symptoms, and after removal of the organisms, developed violent symptoms referred to the nose and secondarily to the fauces and larynx, and also possibly to the ears. (The patient reported from a distance at this time, with some uncertainty of description.)

In the second case, another member of the family had already removed not less than ten of the larvæ, and the surgeon was only able to find one more. In the third instance, only two of the larvæ were discovered, while in the fourth case the surgeon removed nine. The organisms were endowed with very lively vermicular movement. The literature of the subject is reviewed at considerable length, and the larva is illustrated.

Verderame, F. Enlargement of the Blind Spot with the Syndrome of Gradenigo. (Annali di Ottalmologia, 44th year, p. 538.)

The syndrome of Gradenigo is a disease complex described in 1904 by the author after whom it is named; characterized by purulent otitis media violent pains of the corresponding half of the head, and paralysis or paresis of the abducens of the homonymous side. Of this condition Gradenigo observed six cases, five of which recovered, the other terminating in death from purulent leptomeningitis.

He refers the genesis of the condition to a focus of purulent or simply serous circumscribed leptomeningitis, which may resolve spontaneously, or as the result of operative interference on the temporal bone, but which sometimes spreads so as to lead to a fatal result. The prevailing otitic symptoms are always connected with an infection of the tympanic cavity, from which it may pass to the base of the middle cranial fossa, leading to paralysis of the abducens nerve.

In case of this syndrome, Verderame observed enlargement of the blind spot and slight concentric contraction for colors in the homonymous eye, although ophthalmoscopically there was merely a hyperemia of the optic papilla and of the retinal vessels. At the end of eight days these symptoms disappeared, although there persisted a moderate mydriasis encountered at the first examination, and as to the significance of which no opinion is offered.

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